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PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



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July 26, 2006

John O'Donnell, Board Chairperson AWARE  
205 E. Park Street  
Anaconda, MT 59711

RECEIVED

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DPHHS-DSD

Dear Mr. O'Donnell:

Please find attached the final Region V AWARE Adult DD Services Quality Assurance Review for FY 06. The actual visits were concluded in May, but changes in AWARE and Region V DDP personnel delayed the completion of this report. This review included services in Missoula, Florence and Kalispell.

There are outstanding concerns from this review. Please refer to the report for specifics. DDP staff will complete a Quality Assurance re-visit this Fall to ensure that corrective measures have been completed. Since completion of the review, there have been some changes in clientele served by AWARE in Region V.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss this review please do not hesitate to call me at (406) 329-5418.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Paula M. Tripp.  
Paula M. Tripp, MSEd/QMRP  
Quality Improvement Specialist/DDP

Cc: Larry Noonan, CEO AWARE

## **Scope of Review**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE**

AWARE is operated out of Anaconda, MT with satellite office in every Region of the state. The agency's Board of Directors, Fiscal and Business Operations, and Chief Executive Officer are located in Anaconda while each Region's services have local service directors.

This year AWARE decreased the number of individuals served in Region V. At the time of this review, there were three individuals receiving adult HCBS Waiver Supported Living services and seven individuals receiving Community Supports Waiver services. Two of the individuals who receive community supports are in the Missoula area; the remainder are served in Flathead County.

AWARE continues to provide children's Intensive Family Education and Support services. Those services are reviewed out of the DDP Bozeman Office. AWARE also operates adult services in Anaconda and Billings Montana. Quality Assurance Reviews for AWARE services in Anaconda and Billings are conducted by other (local/regional) DDP offices.

The services provided in Region V do not encompass any licensed facilities and there were no specific additions to the Contract through the Appendix I. The agency has been responsive to local waiting lists and a good option for families who wished to port their funding locally.

AWARE is accredited by carf, their current accreditation is a three-year and covers the period July 2003 through July 2006. National accreditation is no longer a requirement; it is commendable that AWARE has chosen to keep current with carf.

AWARE has implemented the state Incident Management Policy. The AWARE Incident Management Committee functions at a statewide level, yet Region V case managers and QIS' had not been involved with the meetings. At the time of the review the senior/managerial staff in both Kalispell and Missoula were neither aware of the policy nor, participating in conducting weekly Incident Management Meetings. Please refer to the Incident Management Sections of this report for more specific information. Since the review in the Kalispell office, these concerns have been corrected. (See QAOS#7)

Agency communication has been of concern. The staff in both Missoula and Kalispell have proven to be very dedicated and hard working. However, Case Managers and regional DD staff have experienced difficulties in getting in touch with them. The direct service staff do have opportunity to meet with their supervisors at least bi-weekly and internal communication appears to be good.

AWARE is a fiscally sound organization. There were no issues noted with the required A133 audit. The staff involved with community supports services in Missoula document services in progress notes with corresponding hours of service. It is easy to verify services provided. This year, there was an error in billing for community supports

services for an individual for two months after she ceased utilizing the service. The fiscal officers in Anaconda were not informed of this exit from services by the Missoula staff. (Please see Quality Assurance Observation Sheet –QAOS- #1). Given that there is a system in place to keep records of hours of service provided, it seems that there should be an effective and accurate system for billing for services. Please refer to the Service Planning and Delivery section of this report for more specifics.

## **Specific Services Reviewed**

### **A. SUPPORTED LIVING**

Three Individuals receive supported Living services through the Kalispell office. Judi Allen, QIS in Kalispell only reviewed 2 individuals as the third had only been in services for one month.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

In Kalispell, medication logs were checked and medication training documentation was available. Staff are medication certified through the AWARE medication certification that AWARE staff report was approved by the State DD Office. Staff must pass the test to be able to assist in the medication process. (Please refer to QAOS #9 for specific information on medication certification)

AWARE has an emergency back-up system. Individuals have access to an on-call staff member 24-hours per day. All sites visited were neat and clean. (See QAOS #6 for Deficiencies)

## **SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY**

Individuals served were very independent within the community and participated in leisure/ recreation activities. AWARE consumers reflect a high degree of satisfaction with services. Individual rights and responsibilities are promoted. No concerns noted with right restrictions or aversive procedures. (See QAOS # 5 for deficiencies)

Aware' staff is very dedicated and thorough in addressing medical and psychological needs of their consumers. The staff is always willing to go that extra mile to better serve their consumers. Your team work is excellent and thank you all for your ongoing commitment. (See QAOS #8) Consumer satisfaction surveys are complete with no unanswered questions. Surveys are attached to IP/PSP.

## **STAFFING**

Refer to information in the community supports section of this report

## **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

The AWARE Incident Management system functions at a statewide level. As detailed in QAOS #3 and # 7, at the local level the notifications and Incident Report form

documentation is not consistent. There have been no critical incident investigations conducted in Region V this year. (Refer to QAOS #7 for deficiencies).

## **B. Work/Day/Community Employment**

AWARE does not provide day/vocational services in Region V.

## **C. Community Supports**

AWARE provides community supports services to two individuals in the Missoula area and five individuals in the Kalispell area. AWARE's presence in Region V is a welcome addition for individuals in Region V to have a choice of service provider.

During last year's Quality Assurance Review, improvement was noted in the Individual Planning Process, program documentation and quarterly reviews. These concerns were corrections from the 2003 Quality Assurance Review. At this time, they have again become concerns. Please refer to the Individual Planning sections of this report for more specific information. For Kalispell See QAOS # 5 for IP concerns.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

AWARE staff in Missoula do not assist individuals with medication administration. Therefore, AWARE staff are not certified through the DDP medication certification process. However, in the Kalispell office staff do assist individuals with medication. The Aware staff must pass the Aware med certification prior to assisting in medication. The AWARE medication test was approved by DDP for adolescent services only. Two staff in Kalispell have been certified. (Refer to QAOS #9).

In the Missoula and Kalispell areas of review, there was no documentation of evacuation drill for the individual who lives in a community rental apartment. This documentation must be shared with the individuals Planning Team on an annual bases (see QAOS #6). In Missoula Staff reported that evacuation drills are not completed. (Please see QAOS #2).

AWARE has an emergency back-up system. Individuals have access to an on-call staff member 24-hours per day. Recently a Missoula individual had a trip to the emergency room for a suspected overdose of over-the-counter medication. Staff did not follow the Incident Reporting procedures; the Case Manager was not notified for two or three days. The reporting staff was unable to accurately report if the individual had been hospitalized, and for how long. During this review staff were unable to describe discharge instructions. (Please see QAOS #3).

## **Vehicles**

AWARE employees use their own vehicles to transport consumers/kids. The employee's insurance is checked to verify they carry the AWARE standard for rate of coverage. They then become the primary insured and AWARE is secondary.

## **SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY**

Individual Plans are based on assessments. However, this year Case Managers have reported that no Quarterly Status Reports were submitted. After the 2003 Review, data collection sheets are prototypes of quarterly status reports were shared with AWARE staff in Missoula. These documentation sheets are available in consumer files yet, are not filled out. (Please see QAOS #4). The Kalispell office does submit quarterlies, however they are often late and when submitted the reports are lacking in a measurable tracking system. (See QAOS#5, item 8)

In addition to the above, the individual receiving community supports in Missoula is scheduled to receive 16 hours per month of direct service. As described, AWARE staff keep detailed progress notes for direct services delivered. During February 2006, this individual received 8 hours of services, yet billing was submitted for the full monthly amount (16hours). (Please see QAOS #4). This issue, coupled with the billing concerns described on QAOS #1 suggest that AWARE revamp it's billing procedures to be more accurate in billing for actual services delivered.

AWARE consumers reflect a high degree of satisfaction with services in both Kalispell and Missoula. The individual receiving community supports in Florence, MT lives with her family. She has formed a strong bond with the direct service staff member and the family is pleased with services. Early this fiscal year, there had been some staffing changes and there were periods of time when the consumer's parents were not satisfied with services, however it appears that the current match of this direct service staff has alleviated these concerns. In both Kalispell and Missoula AWARE promotes individual rights and responsibilities. There are no concerns noted with right's restrictions or aversive procedures.

## **STAFFING**

For both direct service staff in Missoula the required Montana Department of Justice background check was completed. No information was available to document Orientation training. One staff reported receiving no orientation training, and the other reported that an orientation curriculum was delivered. Both staff did well on the Staff Survey, which includes questions from each required Orientation Training area.

## **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

Refer to information on Incident Management detailed earlier in this report.

### **D. Transportation**

AWARE employees use their own vehicles to transport consumers/kids. The employee's insurance is checked to verify they carry the AWARE standard for rate of coverage. They then become the primary insured and AWARE is secondary.

## **CASE MANAGEMENT**

AWARE does not provide Case Management services in Region V.

## **Conclusion**

A Plan of Correction is needed for AWARE to detail how they will apply a permanent fix to the Individual Planning concerns noted in this report. Many of these concerns mirror issues addressed in the 2003 report, and a trend has developed.

The billing issues addressed in QAOS #3 should be addressed. Since AWARE staff are diligent in recording services delivered for their Mental Health contracts, it seems that is an appropriate system to ensure that services delivered and billed for individuals with DD contracts are accurate.

The Quality Assurance Observation Sheets have all been completed and accepted. It will be necessary for the Quality Improvement Specialists to complete another QA revisit/ review to ensure implementation.

There were delays in completion of the QAOS portions and written completion of this report due to changes in key personnel with AWARE and Regional DDP staff. Staff from Anaconda with many years experience with the developmentally disabled will now have oversight of AWARE's DD services in Region V.

Submitted by:



Paula Miskuly-Tripp, MEd/QMRP  
Quality Improvement Specialist  
Developmental Disabilities Program (Missoula)

Cc: Ted Spas, Regional Manager DDP – Missoula  
Larry Lovelace, Regional Manager DDP – Helena  
John Zeeck, Quality Assurance Specialist DDP – Helena  
Tim Plaska, Community Service Bureau Chief DDP – Helena  
Mary-Graham Rasco, Community Director AWARE – Kalispell  
Donna Kelly, AWARE Anaconda  
Mike Schulte, AWARE Anaconda